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Thursday, December 14, 2023

New Buffalo school board selects name for Planned Unit Development **PAGE 4**

Chikaming Township Board approves continued discussion of fire services regionalization **PAGE 5**

Disappointing loss for Bison after big win; Lady Bison still winless but improving **PAGES 8, 9**

Students showcased at School of American Music's winter recital
PAGE 10

Carolers bring holiday cheer to Harbert **PAGE 13**

Student musicians ring in the holidays **PAGE 18**

GOOD PUPPY…

STUDENTS HELP ANIMALS AWAITING SECOND CHANCES

— PAGE 12 —

PHOTO OF KATELYN BERNITH INTRODUCING ONE OF THE SHELTER DOGS TO STUDENTS BY FRANCESCA SAGALA

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Door opens for industry at I-94 interchange

BY STAN MADDUX

Facilities containing nearly 300,000 square feet of combined space for industrial type use are planned along a stretch of Interstate 94 in La Porte County.

Great Lakes Capital is behind the estimated $29 million investment on a 33 acre site at the northeast quadrant of the Interstate 94 and U.S. 421 interchange.

Isaac Hall, a financial analyst with the Goshen based development firm, said space in one of the buildings will be available to lease by smaller contractors and companies involved in warehousing.

Hall said a majority of the space will be for logistics or light manufacturing.

"We've done 15 plus of these developments across the Midwest," he told the La Porte County Commissioners, who opened the door for the project Wednesday by changing the commercial zoning of the property to manufacturing at the developer's request.

Construction of the concrete buildings is expected to begin in the spring.

Matt Reardon, executive director of the La Porte County Office of Economic Development, said the largest structure will contain about 200,000 square feet.

The other 76,000 square foot building will be for smaller contractors and other businesses like a machine shop.

Reardon said the amount of space required by each company will be provided by the placement of walls on the inside of the structures where needed.

The site was chosen because of the advantages being close to Interstate 94 provides in delivering and receiving product.

Reardon also said demand is high for spec buildings which are in short supply right now in the immediate area.

"We do have a deficit in the market for this kind of space. When they go up, they seem to get filled up pretty quick. It's what we're looking for," he said.

Reardon said marketing efforts to find tenants for the space will now begin since the zoning change recommended by the La Porte County Planning Commission was given final approval by the county commissioners.

There's still about 600 acres left for developing at the interchange, which has a Loves Travel Center scheduled to open before the end of the month.

The truck stop is at the southwest quadrant of the interchange near the former Waste Management Landfill.

Opening the door to its construction was the extension of municipal water and sewer lines beneath Interstate 94 to the site.

Reardon said the vision is for the interchange to mirror the aesthetically pleasing Ameriplex business park developments that have occurred along major highways at other locations.

The one in Portage at Interstate 94 and Indiana 249, for example, is anchored by a Bass Pro Shops and contains a number of other businesses like McDonalds and other fast food restaurants.

"We want it to be clean and clear so that development looks orderly," he said.

The Michigan City interchange has largely been under developed but that started changing when Franciscan Health opened its new $240 million hospital at the northwest quadrant early in 2019.

A Hampton Inn & Suites recently went up on the northeast side of the interchange.

Reardon said he expects other developments similar to what was just approved will also go up at the interchange judging by construction plans currently under review.

"There's a proposal for more distribution opportunities, same kind of buildings," he said.

Region of Three Oaks Museum to sweeten holiday stroll this Saturday

The Region of Three Oaks Museum will provide a sweet addition to Three Oaks' Holiday Stroll Saturday, Dec. 16, with a bake sale at Heritage Hall, 8 E. Linden Street.

Starting at 10 a.m., home-baked treats will be on sale, along with some handicrafts and books and videos about local history.

The miniature model of Three Oaks village used in the movie "Prancer" will be on display at Heritage Hall, along with other memorabilia from the 1989 Christmas-themed movie that was filmed in the Three Oaks area.

If weather permits, a festively painted sleigh from the 1800s will be set up at the corner of Linden and Elm streets, in front of a snowy pine forest backdrop, which will be great for family holiday photos.

All proceeds from the bake sale will go to support The Region of Three Oaks Museum, a 501 (C) (3) nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving and presenting local history. There will be no charge for viewing the Prancer model or the sleigh photos, though donations will be gratefully accepted. — **STAFF REPORTS**

If I quote you, I've lived time with you. — *Dino N. Fatouros*

Local Government Meetings

New Buffalo Times
Democracy Requires Transparency

CITY OF NEW BUFFALO
JOHN HUMPHREY, MAYOR
CITY COUNCIL
MARK ROBERTSON, ROGER LIJESKI,
JOHN HUMPHREY, BRIAN FLANAGAN,
VANCE PRICE
City Council meets on the 3rd Monday
of each month at 6:30PM
CITY OF NEW BUFFALO PLANNING
COMMISSION MEETINGS
Meets on the 1st Tuesday of each month
at 5:30PM
NEW BUFFALO TOWNSHIP BOARD
PETE RAHM, MICHELLE HEIT,
JUDY H. ZABICKI, PATTY IAZZETTO,
JACK ROGERS
Board meets on the 3rd Monday
of each month at 4PM
NEW BUFFALO TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
Meets on the 1st Tuesday
of each month at 6:30PM
SHERIFF BERRIEN COUNTY
L. Paul Bailey, Sheriff
Chuck Heit, Undersheriff
NEW BUFFALO AREA
RECREATIONAL AUTHORITY
Meets at 10AM on the 2nd Wednesday
of every other month (odd) at New Buffalo
Township Hall, 17425 Red Arrow Highway
New Buffalo
NEW BUFFALO AREA SCHOOLS BOARD
LISA WERNER, JOHN HASKINS,
DENISE CHURCHILL, BRADLEY BURNER,
VANESSA THUN, STEPHEN DONNELLY,
GREG VOSBERG
CHIKAMING TOWNSHIP
CHIKAMING TOWNSHIP BOARD
DAVID BUNTE, PAULA DUDIAK,
LIZ RETTIG, RICHARD SULLIVAN,
BILL MARSKE
Chikaming Board meets on the 2nd
Thursday of each month at 6:30PM
CHIKAMING TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
Meets on the 1st Wednesday
of each month at 6:30PM
THREE OAKS
THREE OAKS TOWNSHIP BOARD
Meets on the 2nd Monday
of each month at 7PM

VILLAGE OF THREE OAKS BOARD
Meets on the 2nd Wednesday
of each month at 7PM
GRAND BEACH
Meets on the 3rd Wednesday
of each month at 7PM
MARY ROBERTSON, CLERK
HARRY WALDER BLAKE O'HALLORAN,
JAMES BRACEWELL, PETER DOERR,
EDWARD BRANDES

MICHIANA
VILLAGE OF MICHIANA COUNCIL
Meets on the 2nd Friday
of each month at 1PM

SCHOLASTICS

New Buffalo school board selects name for Planned Unit Development

BY FRANCESCA SAGALA

The property located across from New Buffalo Elementary School on Lubke Road now has a name.

The 37 acres of land were acquired by New Buffalo Area Schools over 20 years ago, with the addition of 10 acres over the past few years. Members of the New Buffalo Area Schools Board of Education have been engaged in discussions with developers regarding potential ways to develop the land, which includes creating attainable housing and retaining 10-15 building sites for the Building Trades students to construct single family homes over the course of 10-15 years. While 10 acres would be developed, approximately 37 acres of the wetlands and trail system that's already been established there would be preserved.

Recently, students and staff were asked to vote on a name for the potential development, which would be a Planned Unit Development (PUD). A Google form was also sent out to everyone through PowerSchool, as well as on the district's website. In addition, names were also generally submitted.

After listening to the options at their Monday, Dec. 11, meeting, board members settled on a name: Bison Preserve.

With regards to the property, board president Lisa Werner said that the school district is "preserving what's there."

"More of it is preserved than actually developed," she said.

Superintendent Adam Bowen said that the district is striving to preserve more than just the land.

"Not only are we trying to preserve the natural resource but I think we're trying to preserve a way of life in New Buffalo - we're trying to preserve the fact that we are wanting people to live in the home that they work in," he said.

He added that this will also preserve the school district, as more families who live there will result in more children attending the district.

Recently, the executive committee met with a potential developer. Werner, who's a member of the committee, said that they "went through some of the scenarios of what's possible," adding that they haven't entered into a contract yet. Hopefully, meetings can reconvene after the holidays.

Board members adopted amended board policies, which were recommended by the board's policy committee, to be in accordance with the Public Employment Relations Act (PERA), with the policies effective July 1, 2024.

In March 2023, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer signed House Bill 4004, amending PERA. Bowen said that, as a result of the changes associated with the amendment, the district's law firm, Thrun Law, released new policies and recommended that they be adopted.

A committee consisting of board members Greg Vosberg, Denise Churchill and Vannessa Thun and Bowen met to review each policy option and make recommendations on which one is best.

Board members accepted the resignation, for retirement purposes, of cafeteria worker Marlene Kissman, as well as the resignation of Amy Quick as girls tennis coach, which was effective Dec. 1.

Board members heard that Bowen has approved the employment of Ed Fidler, a high school math teacher who recently retired, to lead the after school Dungeons and Dragons club.

Bowen said that all camera work upgrades have been done at the middle/high school building. Work on door keycards at the building's entryway has been postponed and should be done over break.

The part that was sent out to repair the flashing light at the elementary school was a bad one. Bowen said that a representative from Wisconsin, where the part is manufactured, will be here this week with a new part.

Athletic director Matt Johnson and Bowen interviewed a potential girls varsity softball coach at River Valley last week. Since River Valley is the lead school with softball, the school district will be doing the official hiring and the school board will be hopefully making a recommendation at their next meeting.

The more a man knows, the more he forgives.
— Catherine the Great

Chikaming Township Board approves continued discussion of fire services regionalization

BY FRANCESCA SAGALA

Jason Roe is sworn in as lieutenant by clerk Paula Dudiak

Members of the Chikaming Township Board approved supporting the continued discussion in the evaluation of a potential fire services regionalization effort at their Thursday, Dec. 7, meeting.

Fire chiefs in the surrounding communities - City of New Buffalo, New Buffalo Township, Three Oaks Township and Chikaming - have been meeting and "batting around" ideas to generate discussion, not only from the communities but also fire department personnel, Chikaming Township Fire Chief Allen Weich said.

He said that staffing has been an issue.

"What keeps us chiefs awake at night is making sure we've got enough people to get the job done when calls come in," Weich said.

Currently, the township has two full-time firefighters, as well as Weich, to help respond to calls during the day; however, nights and weekends continue to be a challenge.

Chikaming Township Supervisor David Bunte added that the "model" of local community members with businesses that could leave their businesses and go to a fire, especially during the day, "no longer is supporting the need."

Getting people into public safety has been an issue, not only with the fire department but also the police department, he added.

Wiech added that the idea is still in the early stages.

"We (the chiefs) have to sit down with how to make this happen - what are the legal ramifications, if there is an interest from the public, from the municipal leaders to pursue something like that, and then we're going to have to start figuring out numbers," he said.

Trustee Rich Sullivan asked if people not affording to live in the communities may be contributing to the shortage, and if how much they're paid is an issue. A decrease in full-time residents may also be involved, he said.

While money is a "nice benefit," Weich said that people who hold these roles don't do it for the money but for their "love of the community" and the group relations.

He added that bigger municipalities have also had trouble getting people involved.

Board members approved a Midwest Energy Subrecipient Agreement with regards to broadband internet expansion in the county.

Bunte said the agreement has been the township's commitment to its American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding for the expansion project and that it commits the township's funds on a parcel basis of $695 per parcel.

It's estimated that there are approximately 210 parcels that will fall under this Realizing Opportunities with Broadband Infrastructure Networks (ROBIN) agreement, Bunte added.

When the township approved the resolution last year prior to the project's funding, there were 480 parcels that weren't being served; however, some that were funded through two other grant opportunities that have already been awarded were taken off the list. There are also "individual pockets of small one-offs" in the township that are mainly west of I-94 that are served by Comcast but don't have a connection, all of which are being reviewed by the county, Bunte said.

Construction will begin in the eastern portion of the township in the first quarter of 2025 and second quarter of 2025 and should be completed by mid-2025.

`The projects as projected for the Berrien County Road Department for 2024 were approved.

Taking the six-year road asset management plan into consideration, the road department gave a $1.446 million estimate of the township's road projects for 2024. Bunte said that this is inclusive of all streets in Union Pier that will be impacted by the two-year Streed Drain Project, with the roads being impacted falling over the course of two fiscal years.

"Even though we're currently estimated to be over what we had budgeted for, I still believe that we'll come within that $1.1 to $1.2 million range for next year," Bunte said.

He added that they had a lesser budget for their 2025 fiscal year, and "had extra funds in there based on the road millage" that could cover it.

A Sawyer Road Engineering Proposal for the Sawyer Road Streetscape Project from Antero Group was approved.

The township has already gone through the consultation and public input phases of some preliminary designs for Sawyer Road improvements. Part of the next phase, which is part of the township's USDA Rural Development Grant, is to do the engineering from Red Arrow Highway to Flynn Road.

Bunte said they had a second proposal come in at $178,500 and he's hoping they can use a portion of the funding from the township's Safe Street for All grant for sidewalks and the transportation portion of Sawyer Road.

A Request for Proposal (RFQ) from engineering firm Abonmarche for Harbert Community Park improvements was approved.

Board members approved the hiring of Danielle Brown, who's from Bridgman, as full-time police officer.

The promotion of officer Jason Roe to lieutenant was approved.

Police chief Todd Taylor said that they received two solar powered speed measurement signs, which were purchased through a grant from The Pokagon Fund, that will be placed in the area of River Valley High School.

Board members adopted a policy for overtime for public safety employees, which clarifies how overtime rates are paid for them.

Board members approved Jean Smith filling a vacancy on the Public Safety Committee.

Bill McCollum accepts his certificate from George Mangold and Chris Mitchell

Chuck Sittig presents a picture painted by his aunt Betty Sittig of Spring Creek School

George Mangold honors contributers to the Spring Creek School restoration

George Mangold presents a certificate to The Pokagon Fund Executive Director Dan Petersen

Spring Creek School restoration is complete

BY FRANCESCA SAGALA

"Welcome to Spring Creek School."

For five years, Chris Mitchell, a trustee of the Three Oaks Township Board who serves as its representative on the Planning Commission, had waited to say these words.

He got his chance at the board's Monday, Dec. 11, meeting, when trustees gathered at the school to recognize those who had made its restoration possible.

Mitchell, who board supervisor George Mangold said headed the fundraising effort and also served as its grant writer, consultant, janitor and the one to resolve issues that came up, said that the school lay vacant for many years

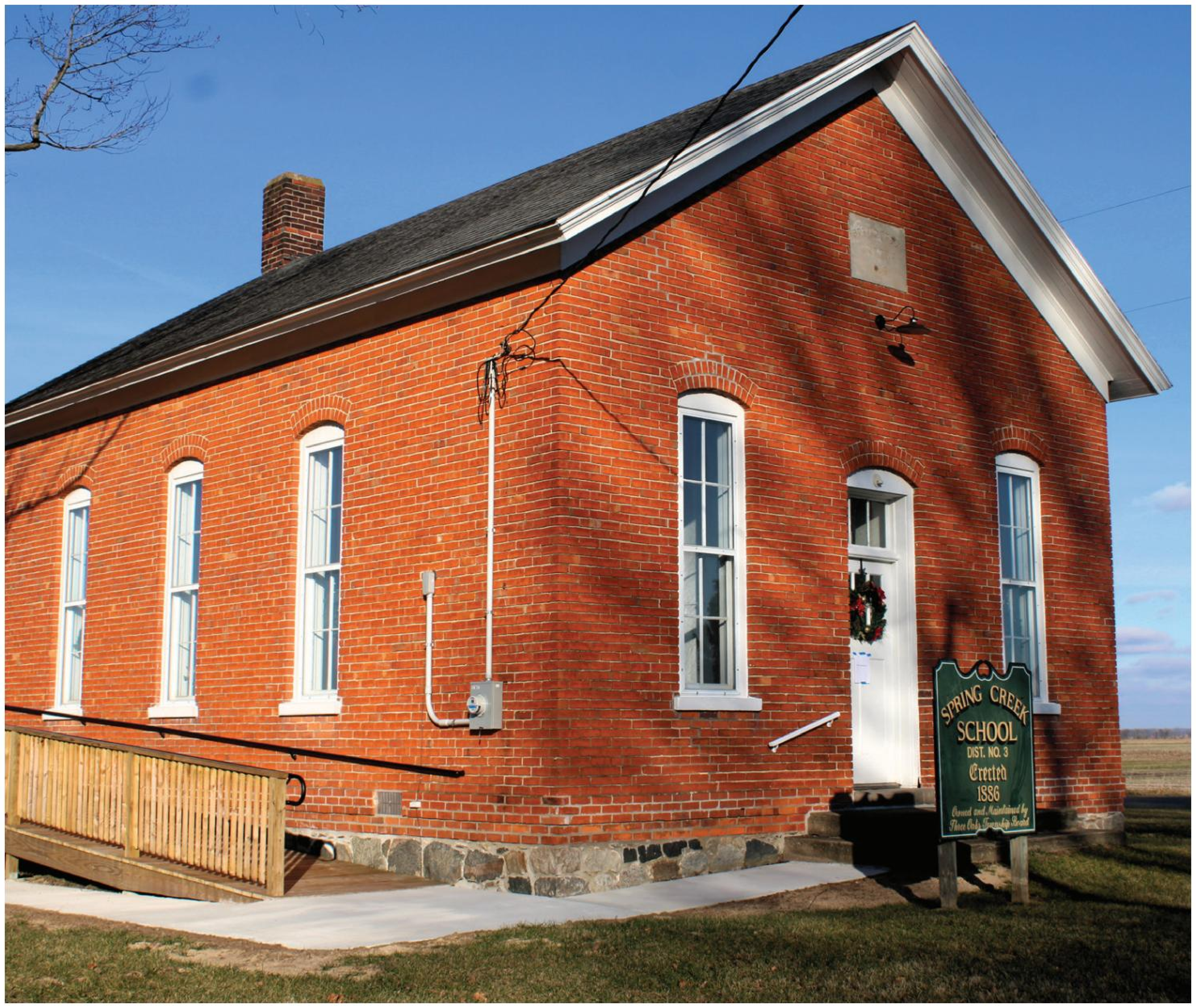
The one-room schoolhouse was built in 1886 by farmers, merchants and loggers for the purpose of educating their children on the corner of Donner Road and Three Oaks Road

According to The Region of Three Oaks historical book by Edward K. Warren Foundation, early settlers held parties, spelling bees, political mass meetings debates and church services there in the early 1800s.

"Three Oaks Township faced a decision: I and others felt the people of Three Oaks would promote restoration," Mitchell said.

A meeting in the summer of 2018 jump started the fundraising campaign. A committee which consisted of Donna and Christian Mitchell, Allen Turner and Garth Taylor was formed.

Fundraising requests were posed on social media. Word spread, as members of the community as well as throughout the Midwest, with family members who had grandparents who attended the school, donated funds.



A view of the renovated Spring Creek School

Framed certificates were given to The Pokagon Fund, the Frederick J. Upton Foundation, the Heart of Cook Foundation, the William J. Deputy Foundation, Berrien Community Foundation, Michiana Arts Foundation and the Lynn and Allen Turner Family for donating toward the effort.

William McCollum, owner of McCollum Architects and Gary Geist, owner of Triton Construction Services, LLC, were also given certificates because they "took on the challenge of restoring a 138-year-old one-room schoolhouse," Mitchell said.

A former township supervisor, Chuck Sittig was recognized for having the vision to restore the school long ago.

Plans are to host an open house to members of the public when the weather's warmer.

According to springcreekschoolhouse.org, of the 700 one-room schoolhouses that once operated in Michigan in the 1800s, only 29 are restored and maintained as historical educational sites.

"The Spring Creek Schoolhouse now stands as a place of learning and a place of gathering - also, it represents the spirit of dedication of the families of this community in building this schoolhouse so that it would provide education for their children," Mitchell said.

SPORTS

From the Bleachers

COLUMN BY KURT MARGGRAF IN CHICAGO

Last week, we recapped the year in Chicago sports, so this week let's examine what the future has in store for them.

Let's start with the Bears who beat the Lions Sunday for their second consecutive win over a divisional opponent, after nine straight losses. It doesn't appear to be smoke and mirrors this time, the Bears are actually playing really good football.

The future is a little fuzzy, but things are definitely headed in the right direction. If the Bears keep the current head coach and quarterback but are able to obtain a really good offensive coordinator to get the most out of Justin Fields abilities, I really believe that the playoffs are almost a sure thing next year, and a super bowl run will be a reality in the near future.

The White Sox next couple of seasons are going to be spent rebuilding. The current crop of players, for some reason, didn't work out, so many of them will be traded for youngsters and the cycle will repeat.

The teams biggest news so far this off season has been a couple of curious off the field moves.

First, they lost their wildly popular television play by play announcer, Jason Benetti, a young man who grew up on the south side loving the Sox and ended up leaving to take a similar role with the Detroit Tigers. Then, Sox owner Jerry Reinsdorf had a very public meeting with the mayor of Nashville, a city the Sox have threatened to relocate to in the past. The future is very uncertain.

Chicago's other baseball team has been strangely quiet.

After signing one of the best managers in baseball, Craig Counsell, to a record breaking contract to begin the offseason, Cub fans expected the team to be very active in the free agent market. While there's still plenty of time to add talent, many of the marquee free agents have already been scooped up.

Personally, I will be happy if the Cubs can re-sign Bellinger or get a good first or third baseman and some pitchers. They were really close to the playoffs last year and I'm confident that they will play in the postseason in 2024. The future is bright.

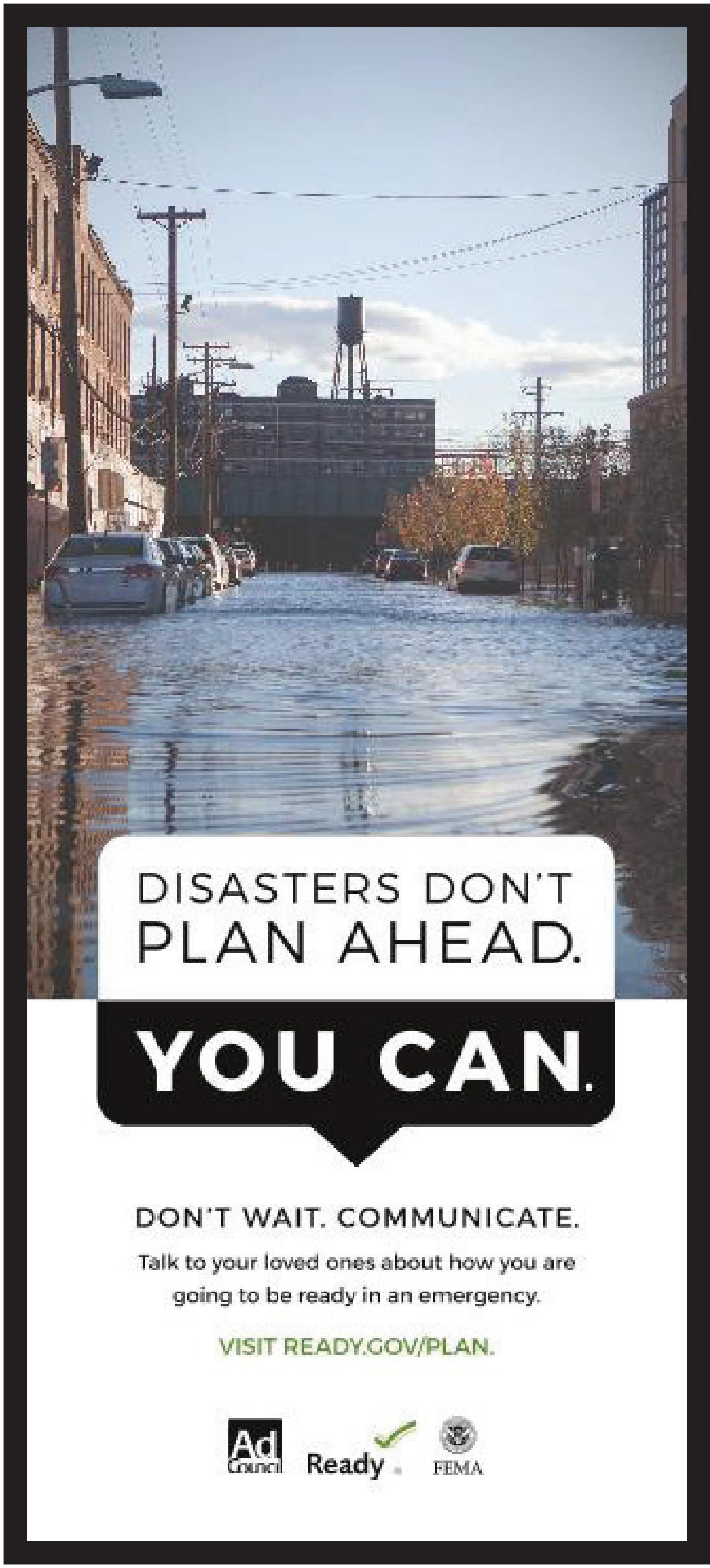
The Bulls' future is currently uncertain. The team as it is currently constructed isn't good, but they do have some individual pieces who are coveted by other teams. By next year, there will be a lot of changes and I have no idea what they will look like, but I don't think they will rival the Jordan teams.

Finally, the Blackhawks. They have the most exciting player in hockey and he will only be nineteen next year. Maybe not next year, but soon they'll be competing for the Stanley Cup. For the most part, our Chicago teams will be powers to contend with for the next decade or so.

Louis Armstrong said, "All music is folk music. You ain't never heard no horse sing a song, have you?"

Be kind. Talk to you next week. Peace, love, and happiness.

If you keep learning all the time
you have a huge advantage.
— Charlie Munger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Disappointing loss for Bison after big win

BY STAN MADDUX

After a big overtime win on the road, the New Buffalo High School boys' basketball team lost at home Tuesday, Dec. 12.

The Bison (1-3) were defeated 50-41 by Our Lady of the Lake.

Head Coach Nate Tripp said his team of mostly sophomores is playing well in spurts but needs to cut down significantly on turnovers and get much better at rebounding.

Tripp also cited a need for more consistency at better shot selection from his players and not panicking during key moments in games.

"They just threw the game away," he said.

Sophomore Lucas Forker opened the scoring with a lay-up.

The next three buckets were scored on a short jumper by sophomore Sam Tripp, senior Elliot Bourne driving in for a lay-up and Tripp stealing the ball then dribbling coast to coast for a lay-up.

New Buffalo trailing by one point entering the second quarter broke out to a six point lead on quick buckets from Tripp, Bourne and senior Andres Becera.

However, the lead quickly evaporated before halftime when the Lakers scored largely on mistakes from the Bison.

New Buffalo with brilliant play at times regained the lead in the third quarter and went up by as many as seven points.

Sophomore Nick Haskins triggered the come back with a steal and found Bourne with a nifty pass during a fast break for a lay-up.

Buckets close to the rim followed by Forker and Becera just prior to Bourne nailing a three point shot from the baseline.

Poor decision making from the Bison again helped the Lakers narrow the lead to one point to start the fourth quarter.

The Lakers (5-0) then outscored the Bison 12 to 5 over the next several minutes.

The Bison pulled to within four points but seemed too exhausted during the final two minutes of play to mount another comeback.

Tripp said he doesn't have a strong enough bench to give his six core players enough rest but anticipates that to change in January when two key players out since beginning of the season are expected to return.

Becera led the Bison with 15 points while Bourne and Tripp added 11 points and eight points respectively.

Forker contributed six points.

New Buffalo on Dec. 7 defeated a good Marcellus team 56 to 47.

Bourne had 15 points along with 7 steals and 5 rebounds while Haskins contributed 10 points, 8 rebounds and 6 assists.

Tripp said the team of mostly players from last year's squad that won just two games is much improved but needs to cut down on mistakes and rebound better to reach its full potential.

"We're better. We're a good team. We really are. It's so frustrating," he said.

BISON
21
BISON
32

Lady Bison still winless but improving

BY STAN MADDUX

The New Buffalo High School girls' basketball team lost at home Tuesday, Dec. 12.

They were defeated 44 to 16 by Our Lady of the Lake.

The Lady Bison (0-3) have been outscored 132 to 36, so far, this season.

Head Coach Rich Knoll found reason to be optimistic about the level of play from his team of mostly freshman against the Lakers.

Knoll said the team is beginning to execute more consistently on offense and each game has scored more points.

"One hundred percent improvement. Every game, we've gotten better," he said.

The Lady Bison trailed 13 to 6 at the end of the first quarter but struggled in the following period trailing 21 to 8 at halftime.

Things didn't get much better until early in the fourth quarter when sophomore Sadie James sank a seven foot hook shot for the first points by the Lady Bison in the second half.

Her bucket seemed to trigger a scoring spurt.

Freshman Harper Bowman turned an offensive rebound into a bucket close to the rim.

A short time later, freshman Laney Strother passed to freshman Lydia Denham, who caught the ball as she was cutting toward the hoop for a lay-up.

Junior Ava Totzke then turned an offensive rebound into a bucket.

Strother led New Buffalo with 8 points.

Knoll said the first three minutes of the first quarter and the entire fourth quarter was the best his team has played, so far, in the young season.

He said the coaching staff is teaching the young players as much about the game as fast as they can to help make up for their lack of experience at the varsity level.

"They're starting to get it and they're hungry. You can see it. They're doing a lot of things right now," he said.

Students showcased at School of American Music’s winter recital

BY FRANCESCA SAGALA

Intermediate and advanced students took the stage at The School of American Music’s winter recital, which was held for the first time at The Acorn Center for the Performing Arts in Three Oaks Sunday, Dec. 10.

In addition to student performances, which included piano, violin, trumpet and vocal solos, instructor solo and duet performances were also featured.

Founded in 2012, the School of American Music offers free concerts, after-school instruction in local public schools and private house concerts.

Abby Shaw sings Estrelita, a traditional Spanish melody

David Wilkes, Jr. sings The Roadside Fire

Debra Sawyer performs an original composition, Zen Spyder

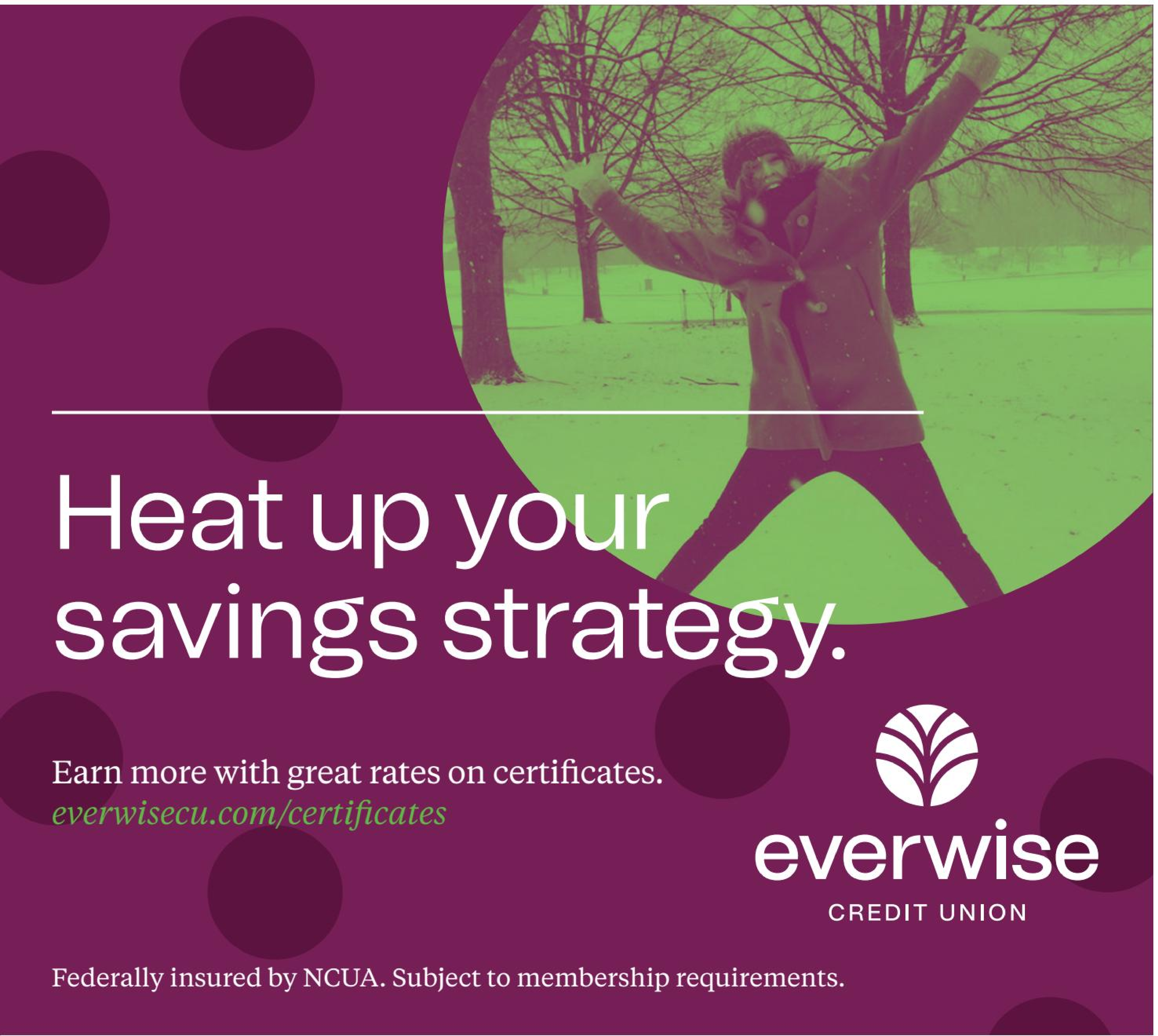
Natalie Freehling sings Alone in the Universe

Karina Hamann plays Chinese Dance from The Nutcracker on the piano

Leroy Knitter performs What Child is This on his guitar

Tom Parisi and Pat Pierce perform a guitar duet to Pavane

Madison Kutch performs Now We Sing of Christmas on the trumpet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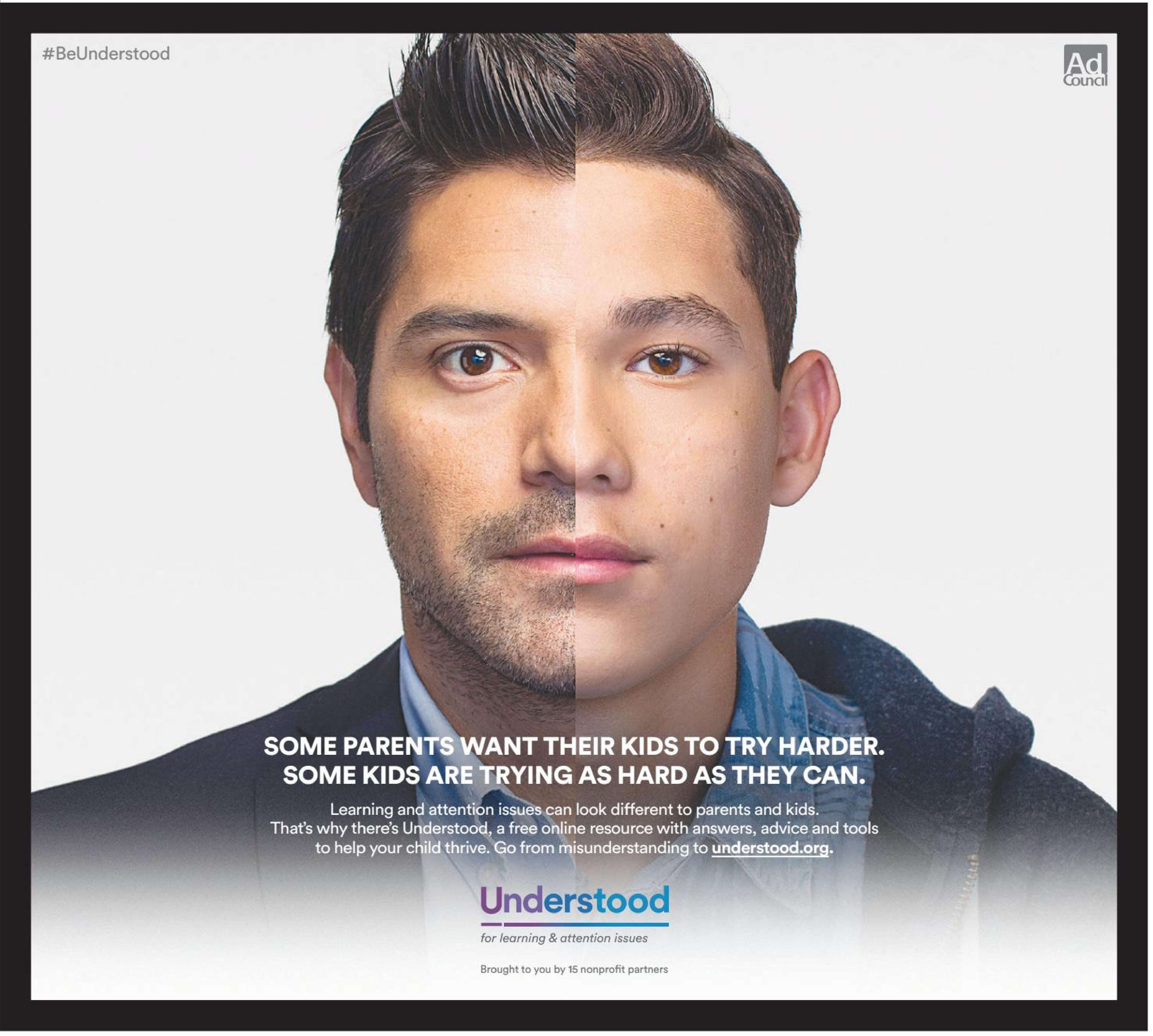
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Students help animals awaiting second chances

BY FRANCESCA SAGALA

This holiday season, members of the Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) chapter at New Buffalo Middle School decided to lend a hand to members of the furry half of the population.

As part of their Paws for a Cause Campaign, the students collected three boxes of pet supplies as well as raised over $100 for the Michiana Humane Society (MHS) in Michigan City.

Students trooped over to the animal shelter Friday, Dec. 8, to deliver the supplies and money raised as well as to visit with the animals and hear about MHS' mission about giving second chances.

Jennifer Bauer, who's the SADD advisor with Hilary Cunningham, the schools social worker, said that students decided to give to the shelter as the project for this trimester.

"Middle School SADD - I've been there for 34 years, and we've never done anything with pets," she said.

The students, who began the campaign after Thanksgiving, raised the money through donations and a Picture Pet Contest Board, during which students brought in over 85 pictures that were displayed on a bulletin board.

Bauer said that middle school students walking through the building throughout the day would often stop and admire the pet pictures.

"They all love pets - it just seems that this group of kids, not just SADD but all people at school, seem to be so happy about the pets," she said.

Last school year, the students collected Coins for Cancer to benefit Angels of Hope Foundation, which was the beneficiary for the districwide's annual 5K in May.

Katelyn Bernith, MHS volunteer coordinator, told students that the shelter began in 1920 in a converted house, with dog kennels in the basement, on Karwick Road.

The current one, located at 722 Indiana Highway 212, opened in 1997.

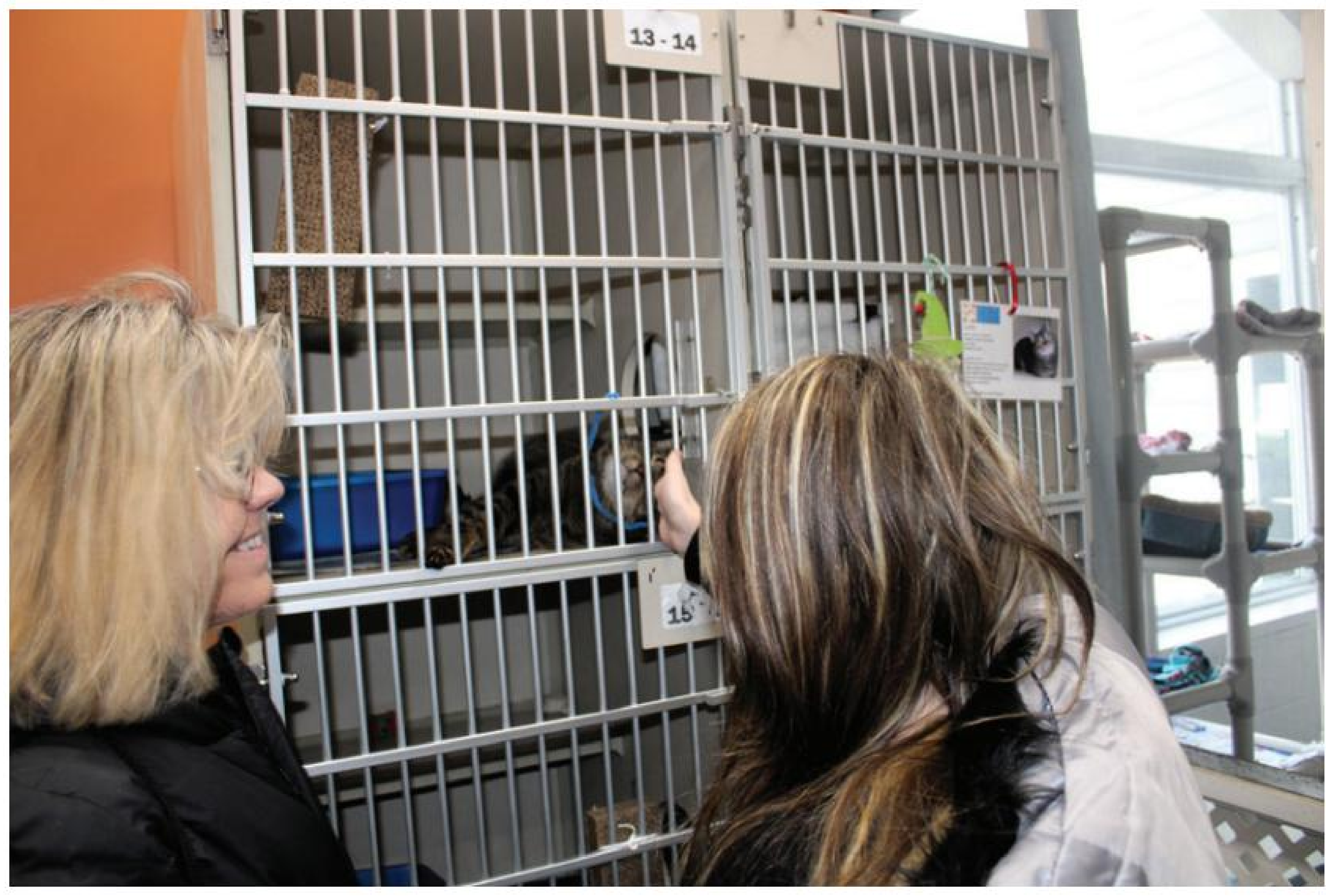
MHS began with a group of women as a response to the rise in stray dogs in Michigan City, as people were bringing working animals into their homes without giving a thought to spraying or neutering them.

Since opening the current one, the shelter has administered over 14,000 adoptions of cats, dogs and even critters. It takes in between 900-1,000 animals a year.

MHS is a 501 (c) (3) organization.

"We don't get any government funds and no tax dollars - we rely solely on monetary donations or the donation of items, like what you guys collected, as well as donations of service, such as all of our volunteers," Bernith said to the students.

Katelyn Bernith traces MHS' history to students



Students meet the cats in the cat room

Students arrive with their donations at Michiana Humane Society

Students study the board for the Picture Pet contest

Carolers bring holiday cheer to Harbert

BY FRANCESCA SAGALA

Holiday cheer abounded at Harbert Community Park in Harbert during a caroling event Saturday, Dec. 9.

Carolers gathered around a fire, enjoying hot chocolate and cider. Members of the Harbor Country Singers led the carolers through a collection of songs of the season, including "Jingle Bells," "Silent Night" and Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer." To close out the event, carolers were also treated to a reading of "Twas the Night Before Christmas" from HCS member Pat Putnam.

Carolers, along with some dogs, sing Christmas tunes

The crowd gathers in the pavilion after caroling

The Harbor Country Singers lead the group carolers

Pat Putnam reads 'Twas the Night Before Christmas

Live reindeer draws huge crowd in La Porte

BY STAN MADDUX

More than 200 people braving cold weather turned out to see a live reindeer Monday, Dec. 11, in La Porte.

Cups of hot chocolate were served to the long line of parents and their children along with older adults still kids at heart waiting to see the reindeer outside the public library at 904 Indiana Ave. in the city's downtown.

The joy from petting one of the major symbols of Christmas was evident in the smiles and eyes of people who also were allowed to have their pictures taken with the animal they had never actually seen except in animated holiday season shows like "Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer."

"It's awesome, man. The kids had a good time. It's amazing," said Anthony Munoz, who made the 20 minute trip with his daughter Gisele, 7, and sons Maddox, 6, and Maverick, 5, from their home in Trail Creek.

Tori Cimbaljevich of La Porte held her chubby cheeked infant son, Noah, as he reached down innocently to pet the reindeer in his Santa Claus outfit.

She also brought her 3-year-old daughter, Mabel.

"It was awesome. My daughter was really excited," she said.

The seven year old female reindeer, "Bell," belongs to the Silly Safari organization.

The animal advocacy group based near Indianapolis also travels to surrounding states like Michigan and Kentucky to show the public not just the reindeer but other exotic animals throughout the year.

Aiden Potter, who's with the organization, held the sometimes restless reindeer while seated in a chair for the public to approach and enjoy.

He said the mission of the group is to protect animals by showing them especially to children.

"We really want to enrich the youth and make them fall in love with animals. That's where you really make the difference with conservation. If you can get the new generation to fall in love with animals they'll want to keep them protected," he said.

Debbie Reynolds of La Porte said she came because she likes special events and keeps her aging but still young at heart, heart wide open for Christmas.

"I loved it. So soft. I didn't realize just how soft they are," she said.

The people showing up for the event also learned a thing or two about the species.

For example, Potter said male and female reindeer have antlers unlike traditional deer whose antlers emerge only in bucks.

Kateri Krueger came with her two year old daughter, Mallory, and her fiancée, Joshua Marshall.

Krueger said she was mostly surprised by how the reindeer did not look anything like she expected.

"I think you kind of expect them to look how they do in the movies. They're still cute," she said.

Reindeer are native to Arctic, subarctic, tundra and mountainous regions of Northern Europe, Siberia and North America, according to experts.

Reindeer adapted for survival in extreme cold are not considered endangered with populations quite numerous depending on the species.

According to experts, some species and subspecies, though, are in decline and considered vulnerable.

Historically, Reindeer are an important source of food, clothing and shelter for Arctic residents and are still herded for domestic food production and hunted as a wild food source in their native land.

La Porte County Public Library Program and Events Coordinator Danny Barnes said Silly Safari has been to the library on numerous occasions in the past with other animals elsewhere on the calendar.

However, Barnes said arrangements were made this time for a reindeer to help people get into the Christmas spirit.

The event along with the hot cocoa, coffee and tea were provided at no cost.

"It's wonderful for all of the kids and I think they're very excited from the looks of it," he said.

HOROSCOPE

DECEMBER 14-20, 2023

AS INTERPRETED BY SANDY "STAR" BENDT

ARIES MARCH 21—APRIL 19

There is a sense of uneasiness this week or of being in a holding position. Commitments and promises could require more work than you had anticipated or take up more time than you had allotted for the job. Luckily, your ability to get help from others will speed things up.

TAURUS APRIL 20—MAY 20

There will be a certain heaviness to the week, making things feel like they are taking longer than normal to complete. You may not feel like putting in the extra hours to help friends with their stuff but that doesn't mean you aren't being supportive. It's that you are busy with your own commitments.

GEMINI MAY 21—JUNE 21

Be cautious this week and try not to over do it. The full moon may bring up some of your insecurities or emotional inadequacies, which could throw you into attention seeking mode. Before you make a spectacle of things, step back and breathe. A policy of non-action is needed now.

CANCER JUNE 22—JULY 22

There is a sense that relationships are going nowhere this week. If you are single, it may seem like there are no decent prospects and if you are coupled up, it may feel like there is not enough together time. Either way be patient, use this time to focus on yourself and your work projects.

LEO JULY 23—AUGUST 22

This is a good week to hone in on health and fitness routines and get more serious about taking care of yourself. Friends are highlighted this week so, if you have a hard time getting to the gym, perhaps you can meet a friend there and work out together. Either way become more health conscious.

VIRGO AUGUST 23—SEPTEMBER 22

You will have some opportunities to advance your career or social standing this week but your heart may not be totally into it. There is a need to make things more permanent and long lasting and if you can't get the enduring results you hope for, you just might walk away. Be patient with others.

LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23—OCTOBER 22

Now is the time to hone in on higher education and expanding your life experiences. If you can enroll in a class or attend a lecture, do so. If not, try hitting the library or doing some research at home. Critical thinking will be very necessary to deal with current issues. Don't blow things off.

SCORPIO OCTOBER 23—NOVEMBER 21

Situations could feel quite intense this week and you may feel like you're being asked to give more than you can give. But the truth is you are entering a very abundant time, where you will feel very fulfilled and blessed. The important thing is to share and welcome others in.

SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22—DECEMBER 21

It will become apparent this week just who is and who isn't backing or supporting you. This isn't about making everyone work together, it's about people following through and contributing. You may have to rework schedules but if that what it takes to get everyone on board, so be it.

CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22—JANUARY 19

There will be a realization of sorts as to what is working for you and what isn't, the problem is you may have some emotional attachments to overcome before you can really move past the blockages. Harness the abundant willpower coming in this week to break free from restrictive habits.

AQUARIUS JANUARY 20—FEBRUARY 18

There is a sense of having to go it alone this week. You may not have the support of the troops now and if you want it done, you will have to do it. This is about standing on your own and doing your own work. Doing it alone will help you see the value of having all those troops.

PISCES FEBRUARY 19—MARCH 20

This week you may feel like holding back emotionally or not following through with plans to get together with friends but this should be avoided. Now is the time to let go of insecurities and open the door to new experiences. Drop the reservations and embrace those you care about.

Before you act, consider; when you have considered, tis fully time to act. — *Sallust*

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Sudoku

Fill in the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9.

9		3		1				8
							6	
								5
1	5				9	6	8	3
		2					1	9
	4		9		5			
8			1	2			5	
	6	5		8	3			2

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS

1 Palestine Liberation Organ. (abbr.)
4 Dance company (abbr.)
7 Chairman (abbr.)
10 Variegated in color
11 Remote
12 Excavate
14 Pilaster
15 Bot (2 words)
17 Exclamation
18 Notes in Guido's scale
19 Shak. contraction
20 Russ. range
22 Equine
24 Mar
27 Hebrew letter
31 Duds
32 Touch lightly
34 Guide
35 Chasm
37 Sugarcane by-product
39 Cereal grain or grass
41 Pharaoh
42 Arrival (abbr.)
45 Ridge
47 Revolutions per minute (abbr.)
50 Regatta (2 words)
52 Nut
53 Shak. villain
54 Videocassette recorder (abbr.)
55 Hung. violinist
56 Dive
57 Poetic contraction
58 Son of Abijah

DOWN

1 Metallic sound
2 Coma
3 Harem room
4 Pain
5 Geological epoch
6 Nutlike drupe
7 Certified Public Accountant (abbr.)
8 Employ
9 Turn
10 Birthplace of Henry IV
13 Bobbsey twins
16 Irish fortified place
18 Eastern standard time (abbr.)
21 Rope
23 Muslim prayer
24 As written in music
25 Male swan
26 Habakkuk (abbr.)
28 Fain
29 Laughter sounds
30 Dutch commune
33 Horse's foot part
36 Moselle tributary
38 Right turn
40 Horse-shoeing stall
42 Mother of Hezekia
43 Via
44 Fad
46 Behold! (Lat.)
48 Supplication
49 Disfigure
51 Heavy weight
52 "The Jungle Book" python

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LOCAL INTELLIGENCE New Buffalo Times — SINCE 1942 —

Prison employee using wig charged with drug trafficking

BY STAN MADDUX

A program coordinator at Westville Correctional Facility is accused of trying to smuggle synthetic marijuana cigarettes into the prison in her wig.

Elizabeth Malstaff, 62, is charged in La Porte Circuit Court with Level 5 felony trafficking with an inmate.

According to court documents, the La Porte woman raised the suspicions of prison security officers when they felt a "hard object" between her legs during a pat down search Dec. 7 at the main gate.

Malstaff explained the object was two pads taped together to absorb urine because the medication she takes caused her to lose control of her bladder, court documents revealed.

She then denied to grant permission for a strip search and body scan, which is similar to an X-Ray, even after informed prison workers are required to comply with such requests.

About three hours later, Malstaff was forced to remove her undergarments after prison security obtained a search warrant.

A maxi pad retrieved from her midsection contained no contraband.

According to court documents, Malstaff was then asked to remove her wig but she only pulled it back far enough to expose the top of her head.

She then removed the wig completely from her head at the request of prison security while giggling and revealing "it's all there," court records disclosed.

Authorities said the wig contained 59 synthetic marijuana cigarettes along with rolling papers.

Court documents alleged the joints were packaged separately in bundles containing anywhere from two to eight synthetic marijuana cigarettes.

During further questioning, Malstaff asked if her arrest would have any impact on her retirement benefits since she was planning to retire soon from the prison.

She was advised to contact an advisor with the Indiana Department of Correction to have her concerns addressed.

Malstaff was held in the La Porte County Jail until posting $1,500 bond Tuesday, Dec. 12.

She could face anywhere from a one to six year sentence.

Lakesid
Union Pier
New Buffalo
Grand Beach
Michiana
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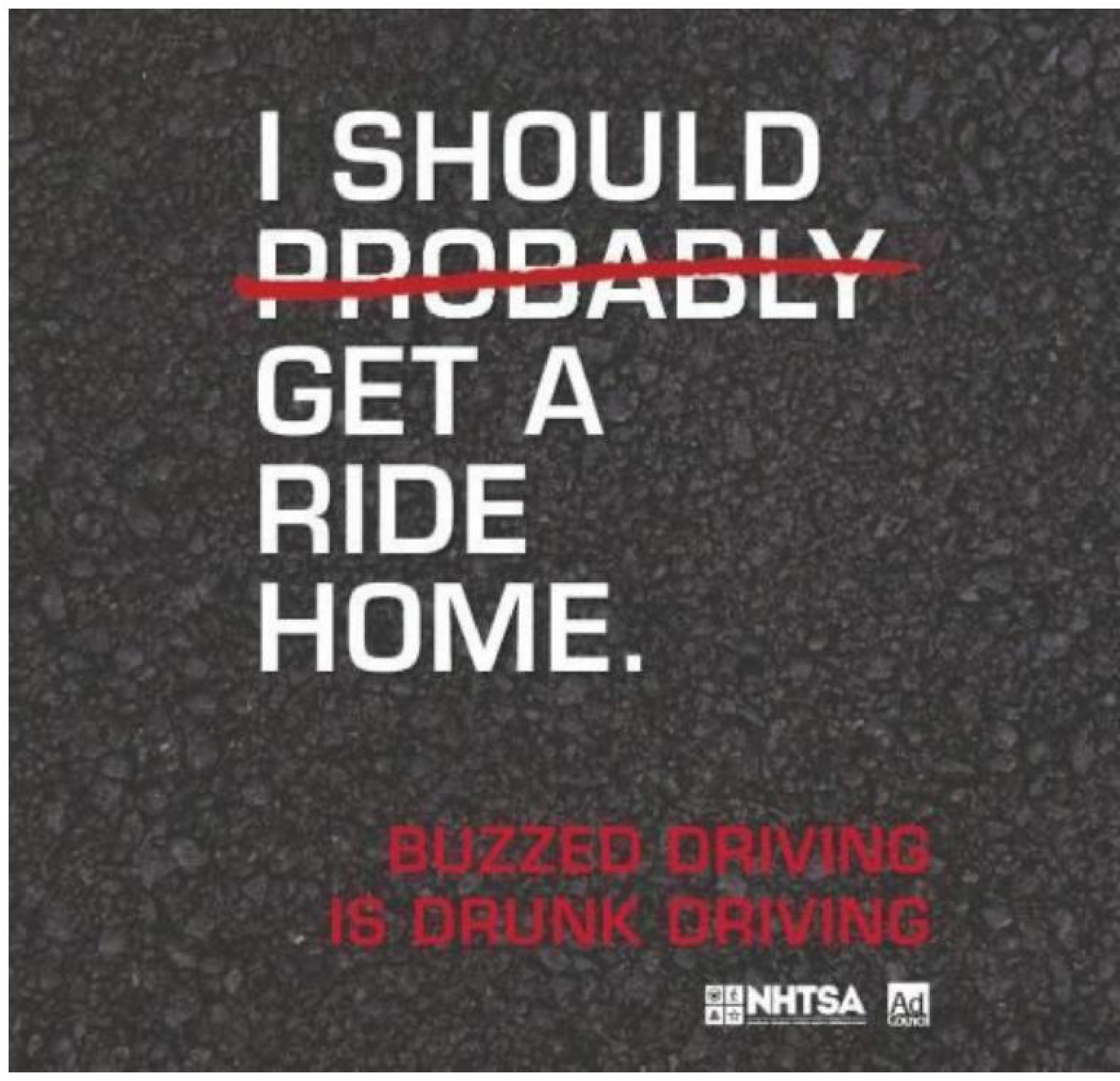
DEATH NOTICES

THREE OAKS – John Klute, 78, of Stevensville, died Monday, December 12, 2023. Arrangements are pending at Wagner Family Funerals Pobocik Chapel, Three Oaks.



Band director Ayrielle Hoyt directs the Blue and Gold Band

Members of the Blue and Gold Band perform a medley of holiday tunes

Student musicians ring in the holidays

BY FRANCESCA SAGALA

Young musicians at New Buffalo Middle/High School started the season on a high note when they performed during their annual New Buffalo Bands Winter Concert, which took place at the New Buffalo Performing Arts Center Wednesday, Dec. 6.

Students in the 6th Grade Band, the Blue and Gold Band (which consists of seventh and eighth graders) and the High School Band performed a medley of holiday tunes, which included the traditional “Jingle Bell Rock” to “Celtic Christmas” and “Three-Minute Nutcracker.”

The performance was directed by Ayrielle Hoyt, who serves as band director.

The 6th Grade band plays holiday arrangements

Members of the High School Band perform holiday tunes

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